

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 A-01 OPR-02
SY-05 IO-13 AID-05 PC-01 /113 W
-----037435 011748Z /75

P R 011329Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 247
INFO AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LIMA 4724

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PINS ELAB PE
SUBJ: POLITICAL PARTIES' REACTIONS TO RECENT EVENTS

REF: (A) LIMA 4413, (B) LIMA 4156

1. SUMMARY: THIS TELEGRAM SUMMARIZES THE REACTIONS OF PERU'S POLITICAL PARTIES TO RECENT EVENTS. THE PARTIES OF THE LEFT APPEAR TO BE OFF-BALANCE BUT ARE CLEARLY CONSIDERING WITHDRAWAL FROM THE JUNE 18 ELECTIONS. APRA HAS ADOPTED A MORE HOSTILE POSTURE TOWARD THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT WHILE THE PPC OF BEDOYA REYES HAS SHIFTED TO A MORE SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TOWARD POPULAR SUFFERING IN CONTRAST TO THE PREVIOUS EMPHASIS ON THE CURATIVE POWERS OF A FREE ENTERPRISE ECONOMY. THE GOP CONTINUES TO INSIST IT WILL MEET THE JUNE 18 DEADLINE AND SO FAR NO PARTY HAS MADE A DEFINITIVE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE RACE. THE MAJOR PARTIES APPEAR TO BE PROCEEDING ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE CAMPAIGN WILL RESUME SOON. HOWEVER, THE GOP HAS NOT RPT NOT YET REMOVED THE EMERGENCY MEASURES THAT OFFER ANY PARTY AMPLE GROUNDS FOR WITHDRAWAL. END SUMMARY.

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2. THE REACTIONS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES TO THE GOP'S UNEXPECTED IMPOSITION OF AUSTERITY MEASURES BEFORE JUNE 4 AND THE SUBSEQUENT STATE OF EMERGENCY WERE AT FIRST RATHER CAUTIONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE PREDICTABLE FRENZY OF UDP AND FOCEP AND TO A LESSER EXTENT THE PSR. THE EVENTS OF THE PAST TWO WEEKS CAUGHT THE PARTIES OFF GUARD AND FORCED THEM TO RECONSIDER THEIR POSITIONS.

...A PROCESS THAT IS STILL GOING ON.

2. THE REACTION FROM THE LEFT HAS GENERALLY BEEN PREDICTABLE. HOWEVER, CORNEJO CHAVEZ' PDC WAS INITIALLY MORE MODERATE THAN HIS CUSTOMARY RHETORIC WOULD HAVE FORESHADOWED. THE PSR HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE RADICAL FRINGE PARTIES, THE UDP AND FOCEP. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE PDC, ALL THE PARTIES OF THE LEFT FINALLY AGREED TO ENDORSE THE MAY 22-23 GENERAL STRIKE, A STRIKE MADE EFFECTIVE BY THE SUPPORT OF THE MOSCOW-LINE COMMUNIST PARTY'S (PCP) "LABOR ARM," THE CGTP, AS THE MEANS TO PROTEST THE AUSTERITY MEASURES. HOWEVER, THE PCP AND THE CGTP SUPPORTED A PROTEST LIMITED TO 48 HOURS, WHILE THE UDP, FOCEP AND APPARENTLY THE PSR URGED RENEWAL OF A GENERAL STRIKE OF INDEFINITE DURATION. CORNEJO CHAVEZ' PDC GENERALLY REMAINED SILENT ON THE STRIKE, PULLING BACK FROM ANY FORMAL ENDORSEMENT BUT ASKING (MAY 25) FOR REINSTATEMENT OF FOOD SUBSIDIES, WHILE LATER CALLING FOR RELRELEASE OF THOSE DETAINED AND THE RETURN OF THOSE EXILED. THE PCP ENDORSED THE GENERAL STRIKE, PETITIONED THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION (MAY 25) FOR RELEASE OF SOME OF ITS CANDIDATES DETAINED DURING THE PROTEST AND SINCE HAS ASSOCIATED ITSELF WITH PROTESTS AGAINST ALL ARRESTS AND DEPORTATIONS. BUT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE BEEN AT PAINS TO DISAVOW THE ACTS OF VIOLENCE THAT ACCOMPANIED THE STRIKE. THE MODERATION OF PDC AND THE RELATIVE MODERATION OF THE PCP PAID OFF TO THE EXTENT THAT PDC CANDIDATES WERE NEITHER JAILED NOR EXILED AND THE PCP AVOIDED HAVING ANY OF ITS CANDIDATES EXPELLED FROM THE COUNTRY.

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3. ACCORDING TO THE GOP-CONTROLLED DAILY "LA PRENSA" (MAY 30), VARIOUS SPOKESMEN FOR THE UDP, PSR, AND FOCEP AS WELL AS "OTHER POLITICAL GROUPS OF THEIR LINE" HAVE STATED THAT UNLESS THE GOP RESOLVES THE PROBLEM OF DETAINED OR EXILED CANDIDATES, THEY WOULD BE INCLINED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. (THE PSR AND FOCEP HAVE APPEALED TO THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION FOR RESTITUTION OF GUARANTEES AND RETURN OF EXILED CANDIDATES.) THE ARTICLE QUOTED CORNEJO CHAVEZ AS OF THE OPINION THAT GOP ACTIONS DURING THE NEXT 4 OR 5 DAYS WILL BE "DECISIVE" REGARDING THE ELECTIONS. WITHDRAWAL OF THE LEFT, HE CONCLUDED, WOULD DEPRIVE THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF ANY "POLITICAL OR MORAL" AUTHORITY TO SPEAK FOR THE PEOPLE OR RATIFY A NEW CONSTITUTION.

4. APRA, WHICH HAD AT LEAST A COINCIDENCE OF INTERESTS WITH MORALES BERMUDEZ IN SUPPORTING SOCIAL AND LABOR PEACE, AVOIDING EXTREME CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT AND ACCEPTING A TWO-STAGE RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE, SAW A SERIES OF GOP DECISIONS, MEASURES AND REACTIONS (INCLUDING THE DECLARATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY, IMPRISONMENT AND EXILE OF CANDIDATES) TAKING PLACE WITH LITTLE OR NO CONSULTATION BETWEEN GOP DECISION MAKERS AND APRA LEADERS. ADDITIONALLY, THE GOP IN FEBRUARY HAD THWARTED APRA'S DESIRE TO

ELIMINATE THE PREFERENTIAL VOTE AND SECURE SUFFRAGE FOR OVERSEAS PERUVIANS. AS RELATIONS BETWEEN THE GOP AND APRA COOLED, ARMANDO VILLANUEVA MAY 16 POLED A SERIES OF POINTED QUESTIONS TO THE GOP ABOUT PERU'S ACTUAL FINANCIAL SITUATION. ALAN GARCIA DELIVERED A STIFF INDICTMENT OF MILITARY PRIVILEGES AND GOVERNMENT INCOMPETENCY AT A RALLY IN CALLAO MAY 18. APRA POLITICAL LEADERS ALSO REPORTEDLY ASSOCIATED THEMSELVES WITH THE RANK AND FILE RESENTMENT WITHIN THE APRA LABOR CONFEDERATION (CTP) WHICH PRODUCED THAT LABOR GROUP'S MAY 20 COMMUNIQUE DECLARING MAY 22-23 DAYS OF NATIONAL MOURNING. APRA'S SUBSEQUENT COMMUNIQUE OF MAY 27 TRANSLATED "NATIONAL MOURNING" INTO A LESS EUPHEMISTIC ENDORSEMENT OF THE 2-DAY NATIONAL STRIKE. BY MAY 27 MEETING OF APRA'S POLITICAL COMMITTEE, A CONSENSUS APPEARED TO HAVE DEVELOPED AMONG THE CONFIDENTIAL

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APRISTAS THAT THE PARTY HAD TO DISTANCE ITSELF FROM THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT, IDENTIFY WITH POPULAR ANGER AT THE MILITARY'S PRIVILEGE, INCOMPETENCY, AND IRRESPONSIBILITY, AND EXERT MAXIMUM PRESSURE ON THE GOP TO STICK TO THE NEW JUNE 18 ELECTION DATE. THE PARTY ALSO AGREED TO AGAIN SEEK ELIMINATION OF THE PREFERENTIAL VOTE. IN THE LATTER INSTANCE THE GOP, DESPITE ANOTHER FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION BY THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (JNE) TO ABOLISH THE PREFERENTIAL VOTE, DENIED APRA'S PETITION ON MAY 30.

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 OPR-02 A-01
IO-13 AID-05 PC-01 /108 W
-----037832 011746Z /75

P R 011329Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 248
INFO AMEMBASSY QUITO
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AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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5. APRA HAS NOW ISSUED ANOTHER OF ITS LENGTHY COMMUNIQUE, THIS TIME PUBLISHED IN THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS ON MAY 31. THE COMMUNIQUE DEALS WITH THE NATIONAL STRIKE, THE DETENTIONS, STATE OF EMERGENCY AND THE EXILING OF CANDIDATES AND WITH THE PRESIDENT'S MAY 20 MESSAGE. IN UNUSUALLY BLUNT LANGUAGE, APRA CHARACTERIZES THE STRIKE AS EVIDENCING THE FAILURE OF 10 YEARS OF A MILITARY DICTATORSHIP AND AS PROOF OF THE PERUVIAN PEOPLE'S DESIRE TO SEE THE MILITARY RETURN TO THEIR BARRACKS AND TRANSFER POWER AND GOVERNMENT TO CIVILIAN HANDS. APRA CONDEMNS THE SUSPENSION OF GUARANTEES AND CALLS FOR THE RESTORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS FOUND IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE AMERICAN DECLARATION. APRA CALLS FOR THE RETURN OF EXILED CANDIDATES (PSR, UDP AND FOCEP). BUT THE COMMUNIQUE GOES ON TO CRITICIZE "COMMUNIST ADVISORS" TO THE FIRST PHASE OF THE REVOLUTION WHO ARE PURPORTEDLY THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE "CHAOS AND CRISIS THE COUNTRY IS NOW EXPERIENCING." IT THEM CONDEMNS THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT FOR FAILING TO EXPOSE THESE COMMUNIST HANGOVERS FROM THE FIRST PHASE STILL REMAINING WITHIN THE BUREAUCRACY AND THE PRESS. IT ALSO DESCRIBES THE GOVERNMENT'S EXPERIMENT IN A NATIONALIZED PRESS AS ANOTHER "FAILURE" OF THE REVOLUTION WITH
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CONSEQUENCES WORSE THAN THOSE PRODUCED BY THE OLIGARCHIC PRESS THAT APRA FOUGHT FOR SO MANY YEARS. FINALLY TURNING TO THE PRESIDENT'S MAY 20 SPEECH, APRA REJECTS MORALES BERMUDEZ' ASSERTION THAT NO PARTY HAS ADVANCED ANY POSITIVE SOLUTIONS, ASSERTING THAT THE PARTY'S ONLY ERROR HAS BEEN PERHAPS IN THE DIRECTION OF OVERLY RESPONSIBLE MODERATION. THE COMMUNIQUE REPEATS PARTY LEADER ARMANDO VILLANUEVA'S QUESTION AS TO HOW MUCH, TO WHOM, AND FOR WHAT DOES PERU OWE IN FOREIGN AND INTERNAL DEBTS, CRITICALLY NOTING THE PRESIDENT'S FAILURE TO LAY OUT THE FACTS OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION FOR THE PUBLIC. IN A PLEA FOR ELIMINATION OF THE PREFERENTIAL VOTE AND SUFFRAGE FOR OVERSEAS PERUVIANS, APRA DESCRIBES THESE AS TWO CONDITIONS "ESSENTIAL TO ASSURE THE PURITY AND LEGITIMACY OF THE ELECTIONS."

6. A COMMUNIQUE FROM THE PPC OF BEDOYA REYES COVERS MUCH OF THE SAME GROUND. ACCEPTING IN PRINCIPLE THE NEED TO REMOVE SUBSIDIES, BEDOYA INSISTS THAT THE MEASURES ANNOUNCED MAY 14 WERE TOO BRUSQUELY IMPOSED AND TOO BRUTAL IN PRACTICE. HE PRAISES THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS FIRM DETERMINATION TO TRANSFER POWER TO ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES, HIS DISAVOWAL OF POLITICAL AMBITION BY THE ARMED FORCES, HIS INTENT TO GIVE MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR, HIS WILLINGNESS TO SPEED UP THE SCHEDULE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS, HIS ADMISSION OF THE NEED TO RENEGOTIATE THE NATIONAL DEBT AND HIS RECOGNITION OF THE URGENT NECESSITY FOR MAXIMUM

AUSTERITY WITHOUT EXCEPTIONS. HOWEVER, THE COMMUNIQUE IS CRITICAL OF GOVERNMENT FOR FAILING TO PRESENT AN OBJECTIVE, REALISTIC AND DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS, FOR SUSPENDING INDEPENDENT PERIODICALS, FOR BLAMING THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR FAILURES OF STATE ENTERPRISES, FOR CRITICIZING POLITICAL PARTIES WITHOUT DIFFERENTIATING AMONG THEM AND FOR NOT IDENTIFYING PRECISELY THE GROUPS AND SECTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVOKING THE VIOLENCE THE COUNTRY HAD SUFFERED INSTEAD OF ATTRIBUTING SUCH ACTIVITIES TO "RIGHTIST" AND "LEFTIST" EXTREMISTS. THE COMMUNIQUE CALLS FOR
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ENDING THE STATE OF EMERGENCY, RELEASING DETAINEES, RESTORING FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, RETURNING EXILES AND RESTORING SOME SUBSIDIES FOR BASIC FOODS. FINALLY, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE PPC LEADERSHIP RECENTLY MET AND DECIDED TO CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION ALTHOUGH TWO OF ITS RETIRED MILITARY CANDIDATES WITHDREW AS A RESULT.

7. THE SMALLER RIGHTIST PARTIES, MDP, UNO AND PDRP, ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WERE STUDYING THE CURRENT SITUATION, CONDEMNED APRA'S BID TO ABOLISH THE PREFERENTIAL VOTE, AND REITERATED THEMES THEY HAD EXPRESSED EARLIER WITHOUT VENTURING INTO THE DANGEROUS WATERS OF APPROVING OR CONDEMNING PUBLIC PROTESTS AND THE GOP'S RESPONSE. MDP LEADER JAVIER ORTIZ ZEVALLOS REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT ELECTIONS WOULD GO FORWARD AS THE SITUATION BECAME NORMAL DURING THIS WEEK.

8. FOR ITS PART, ACCION POPULAR (AP) PROTESTED ALL "REPRESSIVE MEASURES" IMPOSED BY THE GOP AS THREATENING TO INVALIDATE THE PROPOSED CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS AND WHICH TENDED TO CONFIRM APRA'S "WILL TO FRAUD" ACCUSATION. AP'S COMMUNIQUE CALLED ONCE AGAIN FOR PRESIDENTIAL AND CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO TRANSFER POWER TO CIVILIANS. MEANWHILE, MANUEL ULLOA AND OTHER PARTY FIGURES HAVE CONTINUED TO URGE THE NEED FOR A BROAD AND FORMAL AGREEMENT AMONG THE "DEMOCRATIC" PARTIES AND SECTORS AS A PREREQUISITE FOR NATIONAL RECOVERY AND MEANINGFUL ELECTIONS.

9. OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE RISING TIDE OF CRITICISM, THE GOP CONTINUES TO REAFFIRM ITS COMMITMENT TO THE JUNE 18 ELECTIONS. GOP MEDIA FEATURE INCREASED REFERENCES TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ABOUT 2000 POLLING PLACES, THE NAMING OF 60,000 ELECTORAL SUPERVISORS AND THE PUBLICATION OF OFFICIAL LISTS OF CANDIDATES AND ELECTION JUDGES. NEWS STORIES HAVE BEEN FED THE GOP-CONTROLLED PRESS HINTING THAT ALL BUT 6 PERIODICALS (THE RIGHT WING "EL TIEMPO" AND LEFTIST PUBLICATIONS "MARKA", "EL AMAUTA DEL MAR", "EL AMAUTA", "EL SOCIALISTA", AND "EL PERIODISTA") WILL BE
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PUBLISHED NEXT WEEK. THE PRESS HAS ALSO NOTED THAT PERUVIAN LAW DOES NOT RPT NOT PROHIBIT THE RETURN OF ELECTED CANDIDATES WHO WERE EXPELLED OTHER THAN BY JUDICIAL PROCESS. IN HIS PUBLISHED LATTER TO THE JNE REJECTING APRA'S PETITION ON THE PREFERENTIAL VOTE, PRIME MINISTER MOLINA REITERATES THE GOP'S FIRM INTENTION TO CARRY OUT THE ELECTORAL SCHEDULE AS PLANNED.

10. COMMENT: THE EVENTS OF THE PAST 2 WEEKS, AS CORNEJO CHAVEZ HAS NOTED, BROKE THE RHYTHM OF THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN AND JEOPARDIZED THE CAREFULLY-BALANCED POLITICAL PROCESS. AS THE APRA COMMUNIQUE INDICATES, THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT FINDS ITSELF MORE ISOLATED THAN EVER FROM THE CIVILIAN POLITICAL PARTIES, WHILE THE VARIOUS EMERGENCY MEASURES GIVE ANY PARTY AMPLE GROUNDS TO PULL OUT OF THE RACE SHOULD IT SO CHOOSE. THE DEPORTATIONS AND AUSTERITY MEASURES MAY HAVE GENERATED MORE POPULAR SYMPATHY FOR THE LEFT, ALTHOUGH THAT PROPOSITION REMAINS TO BE PROVED. NEITHER THE PPC NOR APRA, THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES, HAS BROKEN DEFINITELY WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S POLITICAL TIMETABLE AND PRIVATELY PARTY LEADERS CONTINUE TO ASSERT THAT PROSPECTS FOR THE JUNE 18 ELECTIONS ARE "BLEAK BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE." THIS, THEN, IS A MOMENT OF FLUX. GLOOMY PREDICTIONS ARE THE ORDER OF THE DAY, BUT NOTHING IS DEFINITE EITHER WAY AS YET. THE NEXT 7-10 DAYS SHOULD TELL THE STORY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL MILITARY RELATIONS, POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LIMA04724
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780229-1033
Format: TEL
From: LIMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197806108/aaaadoqq.tel
Line Count: 305
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b09bc97d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LIMA 4413, 78 LIMA 4156
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2163454
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL PARTIES' REACTIONS TO RECENT EVENTS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, ELAB, PE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b09bc97d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014